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[CLICK HERE FOR CEO's REPORT DATED FEBRUARY 8, 2010](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR CEO's REPORT DATED DECEMBER 14, 2009](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR CEO's REPORT DATED AUGUST 3, 2010](#)



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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February 8, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

## A BLUEPRINT TO END HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES - A PLAN FOR CHANGE – AN AGENDA FOR ACTION

On November 24, 2009, on a motion by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to encourage all County Departments to participate in efforts to coordinate and, where possible, expand the reach of existing anti-hunger programs and initiatives, and begin examining the relevant recommendations in the "Blueprint to End Hunger" to explore future goals and benchmarks. This is in response to the directive to report back within 60 days.

Experts report that Los Angeles County is in the midst of a hunger crisis with over one million people confronting hunger and food insecurity on a daily basis. The Blueprint notes that hunger manifests itself daily in the lives of one in eight Angelenos who too often must make the decision between paying the rent and buying adequate nutritious food to feed their families. The three major goals of the Blueprint are: 1) *Declare a goal of making Los Angeles a hunger-free community*; 2) *Improve Food Assistance Programs*; and 3) *Increase access to quality and nutritious food*.

As part of this effort, on December 14, 2009, a copy of the "Blueprint to End Hunger" was provided to all County Departments to explore future goals and strategies toward ending food insecurity and also determine if existing programs and efficiency efforts can be incorporated or leveraged to reduce hunger.

A majority of County Departments expressed overall support of the initiative although they report no relevant programmatic applications or efficiencies within their operations which deal with food insecurity. Many of these Departments agreed to encourage

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employees to participate in organized efforts to end hunger. Several Departments will look into the feasibility of sponsoring year round food donation campaigns and volunteerism at local food banks.

We found several existing collaborative efforts between County Departments geared toward addressing the Blueprint Action Plan - *Goal 2) Improve Food Assistance Programs and Goal 3) Increase access to quality and nutritious food*. For example, the Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and Department of Health Services (DHS) all reported having existing protocols to assess their clients and link them to the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) Food Stamp Program for eligibility screening. DPSS continues to recognize that a key component to address the hunger crisis is to increase Food Stamp participation among eligible families and individuals. DPSS remains committed to working with its non-profit and community and faith-based organizations to find solutions that will break down barriers in the local communities that prevent eligible populations from applying for Food Stamp benefits.

DPSS has many outreach strategies which include co-locating eligibility workers at several non-traditional sites, such as health clinics, hospitals, food pantries, farmer's markets, churches and schools. Most recently, CEO staff toured the St. Francis Medical Center-Daughters of Charity-Health Benefits Resource Center (HBRC) located on the first floor of the Medical Center Plaza in Lynwood to view first-hand how some of these partnerships operate. The DPSS/HBRC partnership provides access to a County Food Stamp eligibility worker on-site to assist and answer questions about the Food Stamp program. Similar partnerships are critical to further reach out to our eligible target populations who frequent community based organizations. We must engage our non-profit and community and faith-based partners and leverage all available existing County, State, and federal resources.

DPH reports that hunger is a pressing problem especially among low income populations who are at high risk of developing chronic disease as a result of poor nutrition and low physical activity levels. Education and outreach remains essential to ensure that individual and families make healthier choices related to food. Local government must eliminate barriers to full participation in federally-funded nutrition programs by increasing application opportunities, integrating services, and promoting these programs through all public venues.

These are just first steps in the examination of the "Blueprint to End Hunger" initiative. My Office intends to work with key County Departments, stakeholders, and our non-profit and community partners to brainstorm possible strategies that Los Angeles

Each Supervisor  
February 8, 2010  
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County can implement to address the hunger crisis and return to your Board by April 30, 2010, with a plan for Los Angeles County.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know, or have your staff contact Jackie White, Deputy Chief Executive Officer at (213) 974-4530.

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RG:cvb

Attachment

c: All County Departments

CEO-60 Day Status Memo – Yaroslavsky Blueprint to End Hunger Motion







County of Los Angeles  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012  
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<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

December 14, 2009

To: All Department Heads

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

**A BLUEPRINT TO END HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES - A PLAN FOR CHANGE – AN  
AGENDA FOR ACTION**

On November 24, 2009, the Board of Supervisors, on a motion by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, instructed this office to encourage all County departments to participate in efforts to coordinate and, where possible, expand the reach of existing anti-hunger programs and initiatives, and begin examining the relevant recommendations in the "Blueprint to End Hunger" to explore future goals and benchmarks. Accordingly, as part of this effort, a copy of the "Blueprint to End Hunger" is being provided to all County departments to explore future goals and strategies toward ending food insecurity.

Experts report that Los Angeles County is in the midst of a hunger crisis with over one million people confronting hunger and food insecurity on a daily basis. The Blueprint notes that hunger manifests itself daily in the lives of one in eight Angelenos who too often must make the decision between paying the rent and buying adequate nutritious food to feed their families. The County's economic forecast remains serious. Departments are asked to look at the "Blueprint Action Plan and Action Strategies" to determine if existing programs and efficiency efforts can be incorporated or leveraged to reduce hunger. The three major goals of the Blueprint are: (1) *Declare a goal of making Los Angeles a hunger-free community*; (2) *Improve Food Assistance Programs*; and (3) *Increase access to quality and nutritious food*.

Responses are due back to this office by January 4, 2010, and should be directed to Rosemary Gutierrez at [rgutierrez@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rgutierrez@ceo.lacounty.gov). If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know, or have your staff contact Rosemary Gutierrez at (213) 974-0564.

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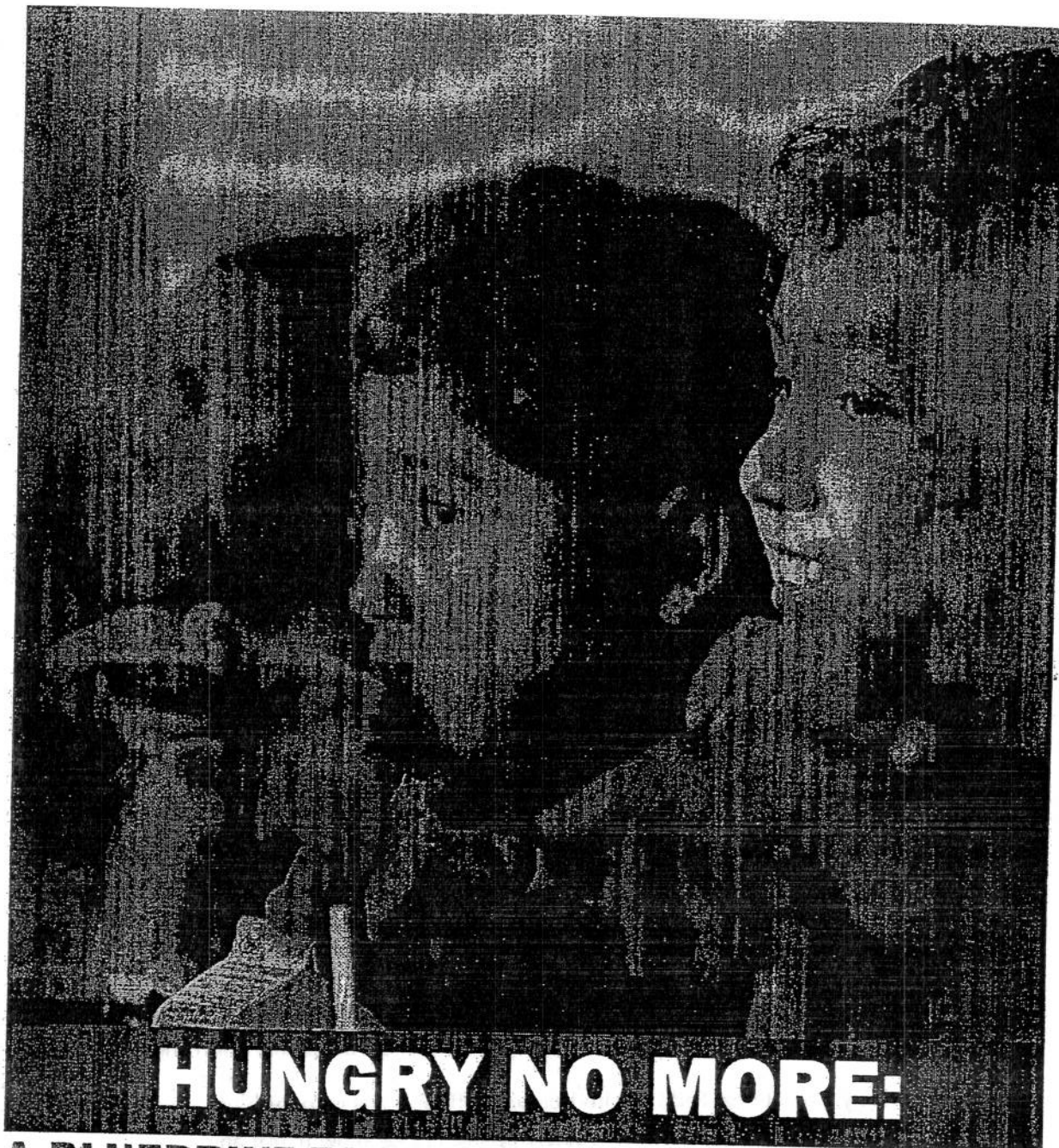
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Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

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# **HUNGRY NO MORE:**

**A BLUEPRINT TO END HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES**  
**A Plan for Change • An Agenda for Action**

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THE  
JEWISH  
FEDERATION



**FED UP  
WITH  
HUNGER**

is the community wide initiative to end hunger in Los Angeles, a project of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. This document is sponsored by The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, in partnership with MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger.

[www.FedUpwithHunger.com](http://www.FedUpwithHunger.com)

# Acknowledgements

**W**e are indebted to all of the leading, local anti-hunger advocates, food banks and food pantries – people representing the organizations that have been fighting hunger for many years – that served on the advisory panel for this document.

We owe an incalculable debt to Dr. Eric Shockman and Leslie Friedman, our colleagues and partners at MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger. There was no conceivable way we could have put this document together without the significant knowledge, wisdom and experience they provided along with our Blueprint advisory panel which included Dr. Peter Clarke and Dr. Susan H. Evans, Mary Agnes Erlandson, Michael Flood, Gwendolyn Flynn, Shawn Gabbai, Dr. Lillian Gelberg, Bradley Haas, Joan Mithers, Helen Palit, Ilene Parker, Rick Powell, Bruce Rankin, Bruce Rosen, Hala Masri, Pompea Smith, Fred Summers, and Frank Tamborello. Their individual, organizational and collective commitments to ending poverty and hunger have been inspirational.

A special thank you goes to Matt Sharp from California Food Policy Advocates who read every single draft, gave detailed notes, answered every question thoughtfully and patiently, and who continues to provide guidance in this venture.

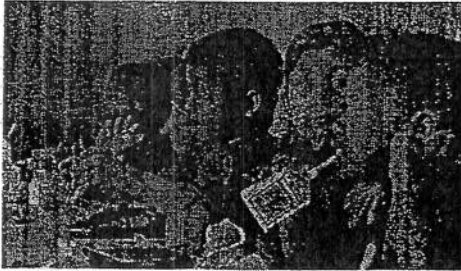
We would also like to specifically acknowledge and thank Dr. Robert Gotlieb for the first drafts and David Lee for bringing the document across the finish line.

Ultimately, the internal Fed Up with Hunger staff takes full responsibility for any errors, omissions or mischaracterizations. Please know that if any were made, they were made out of an effort to make sense of the wealth of information we had to work with and integrate. We fervently believe that a concerted community effort can end hunger in Los Angeles. We hope this document helps make that happen.

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# Executive Summary



Los Angeles County is in the midst of a hunger crisis, with over 1,000,000 confronting hunger and food insecurity on a daily basis. While the causes of hunger and poverty are complex, the solutions to the hunger crisis are within our grasp. This document calls for Angelenos to respond and ensure that no one in our great community be hungry. The Blueprint explains hunger in Los Angeles,

establishes goals and makes a call to action for the diverse stakeholders and communities of our city and county to come together, stand up and take action.

In Los Angeles, hunger manifests itself daily in the lives of one in eight Angelenos who too often must make the decision between paying the rent and buying adequate, nutritious food to feed their families. This daily struggle is what the U.S. government defines as "food insecurity" and it is on the rise across Los Angeles.

In the wake of the economic crisis, with unemployment numbers increasing and families losing their homes due to foreclosure, more and more people are becoming food insecure. The number of people utilizing emergency food services has increased by 41% over 2008 with at least one in six people receiving food aid identified as never having received assistance in the past. The number of people receiving food stamps is at an all-time high of 795,000 and yet, in Los Angeles County, this federally funded program is severely underutilized, leading to unnecessary hunger, but also a loss of nearly \$1 billion in federally allocated funds. Most startling, if not surprising, children and seniors are at greatest risk for suffering from hunger: 25% of children in Los Angeles County are food insecure and about 50% of independent elderly do not have enough money to buy adequate food. Furthermore, the lack of healthy, affordable food and access to quality and nutritious food in some neighborhoods has led to an obesity epidemic that reaches 55% of adults in Los Angeles County and 25% of children, presenting a growing public health risk.

These problems have been magnified by the recurring budget crisis at the state-level. Programs that address poverty and hunger have and will continue to suffer budget cutbacks. As a result of this and other factors, it is likely that the number of people going hungry will continue to grow dramatically unless our community leadership responds.

The economic downturn actually masks the vicious fact that hunger has been a protracted problem in Los Angeles; food insecurity was a pressing issue well before the recent economic crisis and unless we – individuals, policymakers, and neighbors – act together to make change, hunger will continue well after the economic crisis ebbs.



The Blueprint establishes the following three goals and action items to end hunger in Los Angeles:

**Declare a Goal of Making Los Angeles a Hunger-Free Community**

- *The City and County of Los Angeles Should Both Declare Their Intentions to Become "Hunger-Free Communities" by the End of 2009 and Identify a Timeline and Series of Benchmarks to Achieve the Goal of Being Hunger-Free*
- *Make Healthy Food and Hunger-Free Community Goals a Direct Part of the Policy and Governance System for Los Angeles by establishing a Food Policy Council*

**Improve Food Assistance Programs**

- *Ensure Full Participation and Increased Levels, as well as New Support for and Protection of, Federal Nutrition Programs*
- *Strengthen School Nutrition Programs*

**Increase Access to Nutritious, Quality Food**

- *Ensure Fresh and Healthy Food Sources for Emergency Food Providers*
- *Increase Funding for Emergency Food Providers*
- *Provide Healthy, Fresh, and Affordable Food Throughout Los Angeles Neighborhoods and Communities*
- *Engage the Los Angeles Community in Increased Volunteer Efforts to Address the Hunger Crisis*
- *Strengthen and Expand Fresh Food Access and Anti-Hunger Programs Through Community-Based Organizations*
- *Create Gardens and Edible Landscapes Throughout Los Angeles Neighborhoods*
- *Support Efforts to Create a Sustainable Food System in Los Angeles*

The Blueprint also maps local strategies for individuals and groups to take to end hunger in Los Angeles. This is a tall order, but with individuals, community-based organizations, churches, temples and mosques, government allies, service providers, food activists, and philanthropic organizations united, working towards the goals of this Blueprint, a hunger free Los Angeles can be achieved.



# Action Strategies

What We Can All Do

## INDIVIDUALS

### **Declare a Goal of Making Los Angeles a Hunger-Free Community**

- Sign the pledge to be an agent for a hunger-free Los Angeles
- Join an anti-hunger advocacy group to call on the City and County to adopt benchmarks for reducing and ultimately ending hunger (for a list of efforts, visit [www.fedupwithhunger.org](http://www.fedupwithhunger.org))

### **Improve Food Assistance Programs**

- Become an advocate
- Learn about relevant pieces of Federal legislation (The Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act) and State legislation (The Food Stamp Modernization Act)
- Call and write letters to your Congressional representatives, State Assemblymembers and Senators urging them to support the vital programs that feed the hungry and support legislation to strengthen these programs
- Educate your friends, neighbors and business associates on the importance of food security to the community
- Educate eligible people and families about available benefits.

### **Increase Access to Nutritious, Quality Food**

- Volunteer! There are many valuable community anti-hunger programs that are struggling to meet the increased need.
- Plant a community or backyard garden
- Donate the food from your garden to a food pantry or food shelter
- Hold a food drive
- Donate money to your local food bank/food pantry
- Donate leftover food from large events

## GOVERNMENT

### **Declare Los Angeles a Hunger-Free Community**

- The City and County should declare a goal for Los Angeles to become a Hunger-Free Community and identify benchmarks towards achieving this goal.
- Educate municipal departments and staff to increase awareness about hunger and its solutions.
- Create an integrated Food Policy council with representatives from the City, County, School District and Non-Governmental Organizations

## **Improve Food Assistance Programs**

### ***Federal Government***

- Ensure full funding for USDA nutrition programs
- Reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act of 2009 with full funding

### ***State Government***

- Do no more harm; preserve vital programs such as CalWORKs, SSI, health insurance and other low-income supports
- Eliminate barriers to participation in food assistance programs

### ***Local Government***

- Eliminate barriers to full participation in federally-funded nutrition programs by increasing application opportunities, integrating services and promoting benefits through all public venues

## **Increase Access to Nutritious, Quality Food**

### ***Federal Government***

- Revise agricultural subsidies to make healthy foods more affordable and to encourage consumers to eat according to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Establish higher nutrition standards for Child Nutrition Programs
- Designate funding to provide all children with access to Child Nutrition Programs
- Use small business loans and other economic tools to change the mix of food businesses in low-income areas

### ***State Government***

- Establish higher nutrition standards for all Child Nutrition Programs
- Help connect restaurant, catering and hotel industry surplus food donations with food pantries and congregate feeding programs.

### ***Local Government***

- Improve menus and nutrition standards of local child nutrition programs in schools, parks, afterschool programs and child care centers
- Adopt universal food standards so City and County buildings can donate left-over food to emergency food providers

## **BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRY**

### **Declare a Goal of Making Los Angeles a Hunger-Free Community**

- Join "FedUp With Hunger" and other anti-hunger efforts. Publicize the campaign to customers and employees

### **Improve Food Assistance Programs**

- Establish worksite programs at the office to facilitate enabling employees who qualify to sign up for nutrition programs
- Partner with a local food program and to hold a canned food drive
- Encourage workplace giving campaigns and volunteer programs at food pantries

### **Increase Access to Nutritious, Quality Food**

- Institute worksite wellness programs promoting healthy eating and disease prevention
- Work with food retail and restaurant industry partners to offer more nourishing and affordable options on menus and in markets in low-income neighborhoods

### ***Entertainment and Media***

- News outlets should provide in-depth coverage of hunger to describe its causes and long-term solutions
- Entertainment leaders can increase awareness of hunger and food insecurity through adding storylines to entertainment content
- Find out if your network, studio, office or show already donates its usable, leftover catered food and if not, commit to making the donation and work with soup kitchens and shelters to coordinate the logistics

### ***Healthcare Industry***

- Provide patients with information about government benefit programs and improving dietary habits
- Offer access to nutrition counseling and diabetes management classes
- Participate in Farm to Hospital programs, such as farm baskets to patients

### ***Hospitality Industry (food, food service, hotels, cruiseships)***

- Offer affordable, nourishing foods in markets and restaurants in low-income neighborhoods
- Donate usable, prepared food from kitchens to shelters and soup kitchens and support the distribution of perishable food products

### ***Labor Organizations***

- Ensure that members and their families are aware of all benefit programs
- Unions that represent food service workers, such as supermarket workers, can advocate for and support new market developments in food deserts
- Organize programs like the National Letter Carriers of America's Stamp Out Hunger food drive

## **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Declare Los Angeles a Hunger-Free Community**

#### ***Anti-Hunger Groups***

- Further develop into an organized network and reach out to other groups and constituencies to present a united front in calling on our policymakers to declare Los Angeles a Hunger-Free Community

#### ***Environmental Groups***

- Advocate for hunger-free community goals as part of the mayor's Green L.A. Initiative. Given the links between food and the environment an anti-hunger, food justice agenda is a natural corollary.

### ***Faith and Religious Groups***

- Church and synagogue social action committees should join with anti-hunger groups to advocate for the necessary policy changes
- Inspire action in congregants and mobilize them as volunteers
- Organize interfaith advocacy projects

### ***Schools***

- Parents, students and teachers can join the Healthy School Food Coalition to develop comprehensive food and nutrition policies in LAUSD

### ***Social and Economic Justice Groups***

- Incorporate anti-hunger advocacy into legislative agendas, such as affordable housing and living wage

## **Improve Food Assistance Programs**

### ***Faith and Religious Groups***

- Connect those in need with food stamps and other essential social services
- Promote healthy eating among congregants
- Mobilize congregants to help increase the rate of enrollment in government food assistance programs

### ***Immigrant Rights Groups***

- Connect immigrants in need with nutrition assistance programs

### ***Philanthropic Groups***

- Meet the enormous need to increase the level of private and public funding for advocacy, program and policy changes and expansions
- Fund outreach efforts to increase enrollment in Federal food assistance programs

### ***Schools***

- Schools can provide information about Federal food assistance programs and assist in connecting eligible families to benefits

## **Increase Access to Nutritious, Quality Food**

### ***Faith and Religious Groups***

- Partner with local food pantries or food banks and hold a food drive
- Mobilize volunteers to food pantries, soup kitchens and food banks
- Plant a food garden on the grounds of your place of worship

### ***Philanthropic Groups***

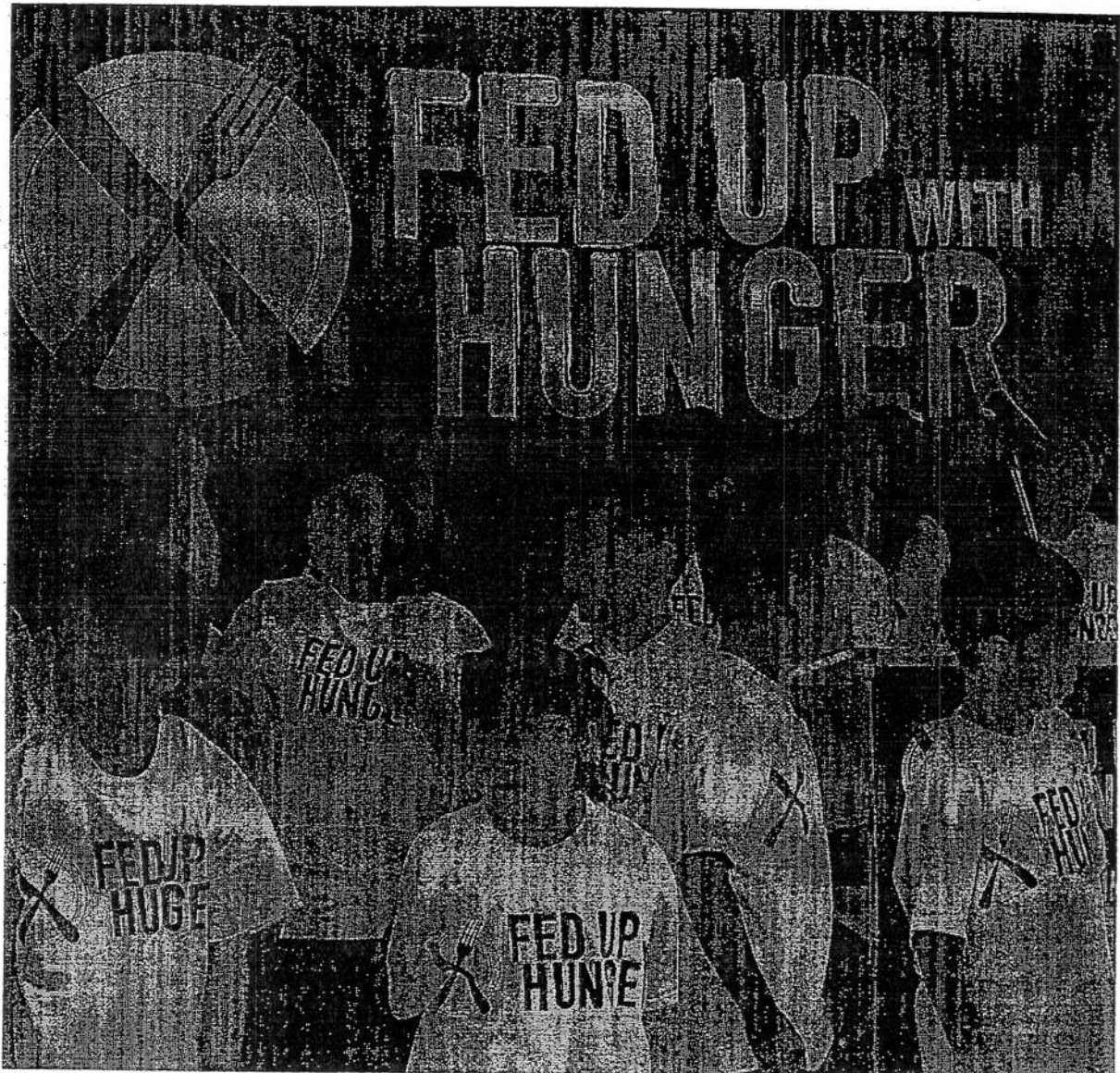
- Fund innovative programs that fill the gaps in food distribution and access. For example, the Wholesome Wave Foundation in the mid-Atlantic doubles the value of Food Stamp, WIC and Senior Nutrition programs at Farmers Markets and other locations
- Create mini-farmers markets in low-income food deserts
- Support urban agriculture projects
- Fund community food mapping projects
- Enhance community food rescue and redistribution programs

### ***Schools***

- Encourage families to enroll in breakfast and lunch programs at school
- Promote participation in meal programs by ensuring adequate time to eat
- Participate in Farm to School Programs
- Plant gardens and teach a garden curriculum to institute healthy eating habits in children

## Foreword

In October of 2008, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, which was founded in 1985 and called on the Jewish community to address the desperate need felt by the millions of hungry people around the world, along with the other members of the National Anti-Hunger Organizations (NAHO), released *A Blueprint to End Hunger*. In broad terms, it outlined the steps necessary to end hunger in America and called for all Americans to join in the fight. The document has spurred action throughout the country.





Unfortunately, Los Angeles has become emblematic of America's hunger crisis. Just as one in six suffer from hunger in America, a nation that is both the world's largest economy and its most productive food producer, one in eight suffer from hunger in Los Angeles, one of the wealthiest cities in California, the world's eighth largest economy and our nation's top agricultural state.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles – L.A.'s largest Jewish non-profit and the central planning, coordinating and fundraising body for the Jewish community – responded to this need by reaching out to MAZON to help develop a document implementing the National Blueprint's call-to-action locally. We also began the planning that would result in "Fed Up with Hunger," The Jewish Federation led, community-wide initiative to end hunger in Los Angeles. The initiative launched in the Fall of 2009, during the Jewish High Holidays. This Blueprint is intended to be the policy backbone of the initiative.

Though there is no panacea for a food system in crisis, nor the grinding poverty that causes hunger, there is an abundance of great work underway to address the hunger crisis and new opportunities for solutions in Los Angeles. With this Blueprint in place, "Fed Up with Hunger" seeks to organize a critical mass, city and countywide movement to implement its recommendations to address the growing needs in Los Angeles.

A comprehensive anti-hunger agenda must also address core social and economic problem areas such as homelessness, unemployment, income levels, health insurance, and affordable housing. Developing the income capacity, such as jobs, job skills and living wage standards, and the income supports, such as cash assistance programs for the needy and access to affordable healthcare, housing and transportation, are central in closing the gaps in food security. While we recognize and reaffirm these essential social and economic justice goals for Los Angeles, this Blueprint focuses specifically on issues relating directly to the eradication of hunger and food insecurity.

Other cities such as San Francisco, New York, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Chicago have launched efforts similar in many respects to this Blueprint. For links to their documents, please see the resources section on page 43.

# The Need to Address Hunger In Los Angeles

*And when you reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest... thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger*

— Leviticus, 19:9

Today, about 49 million Americans<sup>1</sup> and over 1 million Angelenos<sup>2</sup> experience what the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) refers to as “food insecurity with hunger” or “very low food security.” These are people who, for a multitude of reasons, do not have enough to eat during the day, week, month or longer; these are the people who suffer from *hunger*.

Hunger is a powerful and evocative word that rightly produces anger and outrage. It is important to know how extensive the scope, and in what ways the problems of hunger, food insecurity and the lack of fresh and healthy food access are experienced in our community, so that we can more quickly identify and mobilize around the solutions. Hunger, moreover, is not isolated from, but expresses in a more visceral way, the other challenges facing many households, whether they be the lack of affordable housing, rising health care costs, loss of jobs, homelessness, unemployment and underemployment, or the decline of wages and the growing number of the working poor.

Today’s hunger and poverty crisis is similar to crises of the Depression years and other periods of economic challenge. As of November 2009, unemployment has reached record highs – 10.2% nationally, 12.2% in California and 12.7% in Los Angeles County – leading more people to utilize emergency food services, many of whom would have been considered middle class just a few months prior. There are more people relying on food stamps than at any time in history and still, many are forced to choose between buying food for their families and paying for housing, transportation or healthcare.

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<sup>1</sup> Nord, Mark, Margaret Andrews and Steven Carlson. *Household Food Security in the United States, 2008*. ERR-83, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Econ. Res. Serv. November 2009.

<sup>2</sup> This is a conservative estimate. According to the 2007 UCLA Health Policy Research Brief, *Food Security Among California’s Low-Income Adults Improves, But Most Severely Affected Do Not Share Improvements*, there were 957,000 food insecure adults in Los Angeles County. This did not include the over 300,000 food insecure children and 100,000 homeless. Furthermore, as the document will detail, any improvements detailed in that report have since vanished.

The inability many families face in purchasing the necessary food for a healthy, nutritious diet presents enormous health consequences. Families with limited food budgets will often try to maximize their food budgets by purchasing the least expensive foods, which in many cases are the least healthy. This includes fast food and the junk foods available in the corner markets and liquor stores that comprise 95% of the retail food establishments in South Los Angeles.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, Los Angeles faces an obesity epidemic that is related to the absence of healthy food choices in many communities and neighborhoods. Studies indicate that Los Angeles County is at the epicenter of the obesity problem where 55% of adults either overweight or obese. Furthermore, the number of people experiencing weight gain, *including those who are also going hungry*, has skyrocketed in the last three decades and disproportionately impacts people living in poverty and people of color. Diabetes has become a rapidly growing disease that has been characterized as "diabesity," given the direct correlation between weight gain and diabetes.<sup>4</sup> Other obesity-related illnesses, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and heart disease extend to all communities, but especially impact people living in the poor, underserved communities most plagued by food insecurity.

**USDA's revised labels describe ranges of food security**

General category	Details and categories		
	Old label	New label	Description of conditions in the household
Food security		High food security	No reported indications of food-access problems or limitations
	Food security	Marginal food security	One or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake
Food insecurity	Food Insecurity without hunger	Low food security	Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake
	Food Insecurity with hunger	Very low food security	Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake

<sup>3</sup> In a perverse paradox, the corner market and liquor store, often the only places to buy fresh foods such as bread, milk and eggs, end up costing low-income consumers more because these establishments do not receive the same volume discounts that supermarkets are able to demand.

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed analysis of this issue, please see the book *Diabesity* by Francine Kaufman, M.D.



In their 2008 policy brief, *Does Race Define What's in the Shopping Cart*, L.A.-based Community Health Councils reports that of all the retail food outlets (supermarket, local market or convenience store) in South Los Angeles, where diabetes can be found in over 11% of the adult population, there are about 16.8 retail food outlets for every 100,000 residents. In West Los Angeles, where diabetes only appears in 4.5% of adults, there are 26.6 retail food outlets per 100,000 residents.

The analogy with the Great Depression may also mask a reality about the *continuing* nature of the problems we face in hunger. On Thanksgiving Day fifteen years ago, following a series of articles in the *Los Angeles Times* about the growing extent of hunger in the city, three anti-hunger activists and researchers wrote that more and more people were going hungry and that hunger was not limited to the homeless, the unemployed or those on welfare.

Rather, it affected people and children from all walks of life. "If not today," they wrote, "then sometime soon, they will not have enough to eat, influencing their ability to function in school, on the job or in relating to others." Those words ring true today. Hunger, food insecurity, and lack of access to healthy and fresh food have become *protracted* problems, which demand resolution.

In light of the current economic crisis, we are at a daunting historical moment to launch a city-wide effort addressing hunger in Los Angeles. The increase in the number of Angelenos eligible for food stamps and free

and reduced school lunches has reached historical high points, with each month shattering previous records both for participation, as well as those eligible but not participating. Many local social service providers have seen enormous increased demand in the face of shrinking budgets. Their capacity is further affected by the State's budget crisis and the funding cuts associated with it. As a consequence, many of our most vulnerable community members are at risk of slipping through an already tattered safety net.

Though we are in challenging times, there are important opportunities in this unique historical moment as well. During the 2008 Presidential campaign, candidate Barack Obama, in his position paper "Tackling Domestic Hunger," proposed strengthening federal nutrition programs and he pledged to end



childhood hunger in America by 2015. Now, combined with President Obama's call to service, we believe there is a real opportunity for mobilizing a large-scale movement to end the pernicious injustice of hunger and food insecurity. In addition, the President and First Lady's personal commitment to food issues and healthy eating has helped foster and sharpen a national discussion about these issues.

Given this unique opportunity, our challenge is to not simply return us to a *status quo ante* – before the economic crisis – but to identify more permanent and substantial ways to address the protracted nature of hunger, as well as the immediate crisis. The goals in this crisis period must be far reaching: the elimination of hunger; empowering individuals, households, and communities to become food secure; addressing the underlying threats to those in poverty; ensuring healthy and fresh food access for all.

In short, now is the time pull our resources together for this cause. Working in partnership with community-based organizations, government allies, service providers, food activists, and philanthropic organizations, we offer this document as both a blueprint and an agenda for action to transform Los Angeles into a hunger free community.

Los Angeles can and should become a model for other cities and regions in their fight against hunger.



# The Problem of Hunger in Los Angeles

*A person who has food has many problems.*

*A person who has no food has only one problem.*

— A Chinese saying



During the Ethiopian famine in the mid-80's, media coverage was saturated with pictures of emaciated, malnourished children with bloated bellies. These images were so compelling that they stirred outrage and action from individuals, organizations and government. The starving child became the defining image of hunger.

The problems of hunger and food insecurity in Los Angeles are not visually dramatic and may be overlooked by the casual observer surrounded by the abundance of food and unlimited food choices. Hunger in the first world hides behind many parallel and contributing problems (poverty, unemployment, unaffordable housing, high cost of health insurance, poor health) and it has been found throughout the county of Los Angeles, the state and the country as a whole.

The statistics presented in this section describe the problem of hunger in Los Angeles, painting a stark picture of the state of food insecurity and the related problems of housing displacement, unemployment, decreased wages and hours, and health disparities.

These numbers are not simply abstract calculations; they signify real consequences and should be considered a failure of our community, of our policy process, and of our commitment towards a fairer and more compassionate society.

## NUMBER OF PERSONS EXPERIENCING POVERTY AND HUNGER

In Los Angeles County, nearly 2 million people are projected to be at or below the poverty level<sup>5</sup> by the end of 2009, or a poverty rate of 18.5%. This constitutes a jump from a poverty rate of slightly less than 15% at the end of 2007. As a measure of food insecurity (those experiencing a poor or inadequate diet), as many as 36.3% of low-income Los Angeles County residents were food insecure during 2007. At the same time, the number of people experiencing "extreme poverty" (at 50% or below the Federal poverty line) included as many as 580,000 people prior to the economic downturn at

<sup>5</sup> The Federal Poverty measure consists of two slightly different components. The "Poverty Threshold," updated each year by the Census Bureau, is used mainly for statistical purposes. The "Poverty Guideline" is used to determine income eligibility for Federal assistance programs. Informally known as "The Federal Poverty Line" (FPL), it generally refers to the gross yearly income of a family of four, which is \$20,050 in 2009. It is useful to note that the Federal poverty guideline does not factor in the high cost of living in California. Most policy analysts believe that to accurately reflect this reality, the FPL should be multiplied two to three times in California.

the end of 2007. Both the food insecurity and extreme poverty numbers are likely to see double digit increases in 2009 based on estimates related to other indicators.

### **NUMBER OF PERSONS RECEIVING FOOD ASSISTANCE.**

Participation in nutrition assistance programs is not a pure indicator of need, as the level of enrollment reflects several factors, including accessibility of services, difficulty of the application process, lack of awareness of eligibility for benefits, as well as the depth of need among participants.

#### ***Food Stamps<sup>6</sup>***

In Los Angeles County, in March 2009, 743,000 people received Food Stamps, a record number and a 15% jump from the year before. In just three months, that number increased to 795,000. Food Stamps provide an average of over \$100 per participant per month in benefits, providing County residents with \$123 million in purchasing power a month and with the multiplier effect of Food Stamps, they have an impact of over \$226 million dollars<sup>7</sup> in our local economy.

Still, according to USDA estimates, as many as 1,175,000 impoverished residents in Los Angeles County do not receive Food Stamps, including many who might be eligible. According to the Economic Roundtable's projections, in 2008, the Food Stamp caseload in Los Angeles was 40% of the local poverty population, down from 50.5% in 1996. With the economic downturn, Food Stamp caseloads are increasing, but by every estimate, there are more eligible families in need.

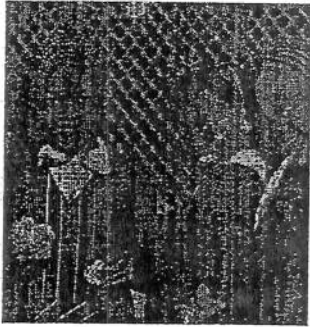
#### ***Emergency Food***

In Los Angeles, the over 500 food pantries throughout the county associated with the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank reported a 31% increase between the period from January to April 2009 compared to January to April 2008 in the number of people utilizing those emergency food services, or more than 231,000 individuals in those four months in 2009 compared to 176,000 for those four months in 2008. Between May and August 2009, demand had increased 10.8% from the previous period (January to April, 2009). In total, food bank distribution has increased by 41%, the equivalent of 5 million meals, year to date compared to the previous year. Estimates based on interviews indicate that as many as 12% of those going to a food pantry were doing so for the first time. These interviews have also uncovered that a substantial number of people utilizing emergency food services include those who are still working but have experienced significantly reduced hours and/or wage cuts.

<sup>6</sup> In 2008, the U.S. Government renamed the Food Stamp program the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Since California still administers the program as the Food Stamp program, we will be using this name to refer to SNAP.

<sup>7</sup> USDA Research has shown that for every \$1.00 of Food Stamp benefit, \$1.84 of spending is generated in the local economy. According to many economists, Food Stamps are the most direct and effective economic stimulus the government can provide.

In August 2009, the SOVA Community Food and Resource Program of Jewish Family Service, which operates three nonsectarian food pantries in Los Angeles, provided food assistance to over 9,150 unduplicated clients and 1,700 new clients, an increase in client load of nearly 10% in just a month. They estimate that they will hit 10,000 unduplicated monthly clients before the year is over.



#### ***Child Nutrition Programs***

In 2008, 652,752 children (25.1%) were at or under the poverty level in Los Angeles County, which means that 1 in 4 children were food insecure. Research has found that children who experience hunger and chronic food insecurity are more likely to have physical and mental health problems, poor academic performance and generally diminished life outcomes.

Over 950,000 students in Los Angeles County ate free or reduced price lunch at school in 2009 but only 400,000 ate free or reduced price breakfast at school. Over 600,000 infants, toddlers and mothers participate in The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

Also, in the summer of 2008, 205,000 youth ate free lunches through summer nutrition programs. However, that number represented only one third of the number of students who had utilized free and reduced lunch programs during the year and qualified for the summer program. According to an analysis of the California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) and the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), if just a small percentage of those young people (say 40% instead of 33%) had participated, the state of California would have received an additional \$11.5 million in federal funds earmarked for the program.

More recently, during the summer of 2009, LAUSD was forced to cancel summer school programs due to the state budget crisis. This put over 200,000 kids at risk for food insecurity since the summer lunch program served children free, nutritious meals.

#### **SENIORS AND THE MOST VULNERABLE AMONG US ARE AMONG THE FOOD INSECURE**

Not surprisingly, hunger hits our dependent populations hardest and its effects can truly be staggering and life altering. A 2009 study done by UCLA Health Policy Research and the Insight Center for Economic Development estimates that about 312,000 seniors living alone in Los Angeles County (54% of the independent elderly population) do not have enough money to make ends meet, lacking sufficient resources for basic expenses such as food, health care and housing.



As many of the elderly are also on prescription medications that depend on a nutritious diet in order to be efficacious, the consequences of a compromised diet are far reaching. Food insecure seniors also experience feelings of isolation and depression, which may further hasten health problems. Caseworkers in the Antelope Valley in fact have reported finding seniors passed out on the floor, with no food in their cabinet. Yet only about a third of all seniors eligible for food stamps participate in the program, a problem exacerbated by limited transportation options.

L.A. County is home to about 750,000 people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a federally funded program that benefits the low-income blind, disabled and elderly, representing half of the program's participants in California. California adds an additional monthly cash benefit to the federal SSI payment (known as the State Supplemental Payment, or SSP), which makes SSI/SSP recipients ineligible for Food Stamp assistance. In 2009, SSI/SSP recipients have seen their benefits cut from \$907 to \$845 a month. As a large portion of this amount goes to housing and other necessities, recipients are left with little to no money for food.

#### **THE LACK OF HEALTHY, AFFORDABLE, AND FRESH FOOD ACCESS HAS BECOME A CHRONIC PROBLEM IN MULTIPLE COMMUNITIES**

In L.A. County, many low-income neighborhoods with the largest number of fast food restaurants, liquor stores and convenience markets also lack full service supermarkets with a wider selection of fresh and affordable food. In a paper called *Improving the Nutritional Resource Environment for Healthy Living Through Community-Based Participatory Research*, investigators found that healthy food options like fresh produce, nonfat milk, and whole grain breads were significantly less available in South Los Angeles and that only 70% of stores in South Los Angeles carried fresh produce compared to 94% in an adjacent community.

According to the L.A. County Public Health Department survey, those residents who rate the quality of fresh fruits and vegetables that they can access as high was 36% while in the South and East Service Planning Areas (SPA<sup>8</sup>) those percentages were 27.6% and 30.4% respectively. The percentage of adults who consume five or more fruits and vegetables a day (a key indicator of healthful access to foods) is 15.1% in the County and 12.7% in South L.A.

<sup>8</sup> Los Angeles County is divided into eight "Service Planning Areas" (SPA's) for health care planning purposes. Each SPA has an Area Health Office that is responsible for planning public health and clinical services according to the health needs of local communities.



In contrast, 40.2% of adult County residents surveyed and 47.3% of children eat fast food at least once a week, compared to 42.0% of adults and 51.8% of children in South L.A. Soda consumption is also high – 38.8% of adults and 43.3% of children drink at least one soda a day in the County and 56.2% of adults and 55.4% of children do so in South L.A. where access to sodas and fast food is greater than access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

In three low income neighborhoods in South and Central Los Angeles, a community food assessment by Project CAFÉ (Community Action on Food Environments) that mapped 1,273 food establishments identified 29.6% as fast food restaurants, 21.6% as convenience/liquor stores, and >2% as full service food markets. The Community Health Council's *South Los Angeles Health Equity Scorecard* of December 2008 found that in South LA, there were 8.51 liquor stores per square mile compared to 1.56 in Los Angeles County.

In East Los Angeles, an assessment by the East L.A. Community Corporation (ELACC) identified one supermarket for almost 90,000 residents in the Boyle Heights area, or more than four times lower than the average for Los Angeles County. According to ELACC, an affordable housing developer which encounters these issues daily, many Boyle Heights residents are without adequate incomes, opportunities to exercise, and ability to buy affordable fresh, healthy food, and thus suffer from obesity, overweight, and diet-related conditions. 61% of residents of California's 46th Assembly district, which includes much of Boyle Heights and some surrounding neighborhoods, are either obese or overweight. 14% of adults in this same area (the 46th district) have been diagnosed with diabetes.

In California, a California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) study correlated with the Retail Food Environment Index found that those who lived near a greater number of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores compared to grocery stores and fresh produce vendors had a significantly higher prevalence of obesity and diabetes.

A June 2009 USDA report to Congress (*Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food – Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences*, June 2009) found that in addition to being "food deserts" (neighborhoods without supermarkets), many of these neighborhoods are also "food swamps" (neighborhoods overflowing with fast-food restaurants offering cheap, bad calories). The report made it clear that a dearth of good food choices is just as bad as having a glut of bad food choices. The policy implications of this report reaffirm the need for more access to healthy, affordable fresh foods in low income neighborhoods.

Furthermore, poor health indicators are pervasive among those residents most prone to hunger. According to the L.A. County Public Health Department's 2009 Key Indicators of Health report, areas with the highest rates of poverty, report the least access to healthy foods, greatest barriers to medical care, and have among the highest rates of disease, injury, and death in the county.

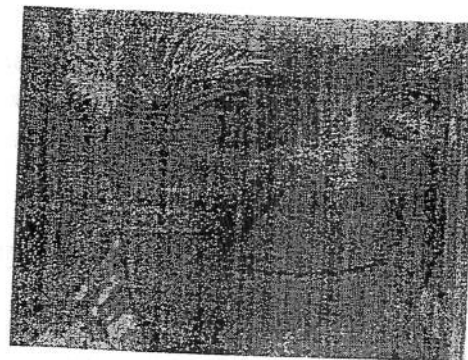
### **OBESITY AND OVERWEIGHT RATES HAVE SKYROCKETED AND DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACT THE POOR, INCLUDING THOSE WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE EXPERIENCE HUNGER.**

According to the L.A. County Public Health Department, the area in South Los Angeles which had the highest rate of poverty in L.A. County also had the highest rate of obesity among adults (35.5%) and children (28.9%), and a 30% higher rate of heart disease deaths as well as the incidence of diabetes (12.3% compared to 8.7%) than the county average. At the same time, according to UCLA CHIS data, of those who were obese in L.A. County, 43.3% were also food insecure, and of all those who were overweight, 42.1% were also food insecure. Obesity and overweight then could be seen as having a direct link to food insecurity.

### **CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

In Los Angeles County, the unemployment rate climbed to 12.7% in September 2009 or 623,000 compared to 399,000 a year earlier, according to figures from the California Employment Development Department. Underemployment rates – which include people who have recently lost their jobs, as well as those who have stopped looking for work or have been forced to work fewer hours – are also significantly higher. In L.A. County, underemployment figures were 17.8% in July 2009. For those without a high school diploma, unemployment and underemployment rates in L.A. are projected to reach as high as 20% and 30% by the end of the year. These numbers are all postwar record highs.

The extraordinary rate of home foreclosures in the past few years has also led to a loss of homes *by renters*, who are among the most vulnerable to potential homelessness, as the banks receiving these properties are generally unwilling landlords. According to the Economic Roundtable, a conservative estimate indicates over 8,400 households in rental units were displaced from their homes in 2008. The number of households impacted by foreclosures in multi-family properties is about 12% greater than the number of properties foreclosed; of these, approximately 18% of all households impacted by foreclosures are renters.





# Blueprint Action Plan

*Hunger is isolating; it may not and cannot be experienced vicariously.*

*He who never felt hunger can never know its real effects,  
both tangible and intangible. Hunger defies imagination;  
it even defies memory. Hunger is felt only in the present.*

— Eli Wiesel

**T**his Blueprint sets forth three primary goals to end hunger in Los Angeles.

- Declare a Goal of Making Los Angeles a Hunger-Free Community
- Improve Food Assistance Programs
- Increase Access to Quality and Nutritious Food

Though each is a standalone goal, that if achieved would make a significant impact on the hunger situation in Los Angeles, the three together create a matrix of solutions that would not only end hunger but also make Los Angeles a leader in sustainable food, environmental issues, food distribution systems and nutrition-based health. Strategic objectives and action plans have also been identified to achieve each goal.

## **GOAL #1: DECLARE A GOAL OF MAKING LOS ANGELES A HUNGER-FREE COMMUNITY**

Despite the efforts of a broad cross-section of anti-hunger advocates and organizations, the Los Angeles civic community has not comprehensively focused on an anti-hunger agenda. By declaring a goal of making the City and County "Hunger-Free Communities" and working toward achieving that goal would bring this agenda to the forefront. Although ending hunger is dependent on federal and state resources and policies, the City and County of Los Angeles have the capacity to initiate important changes to reduce hunger and bring great momentum to the movement.

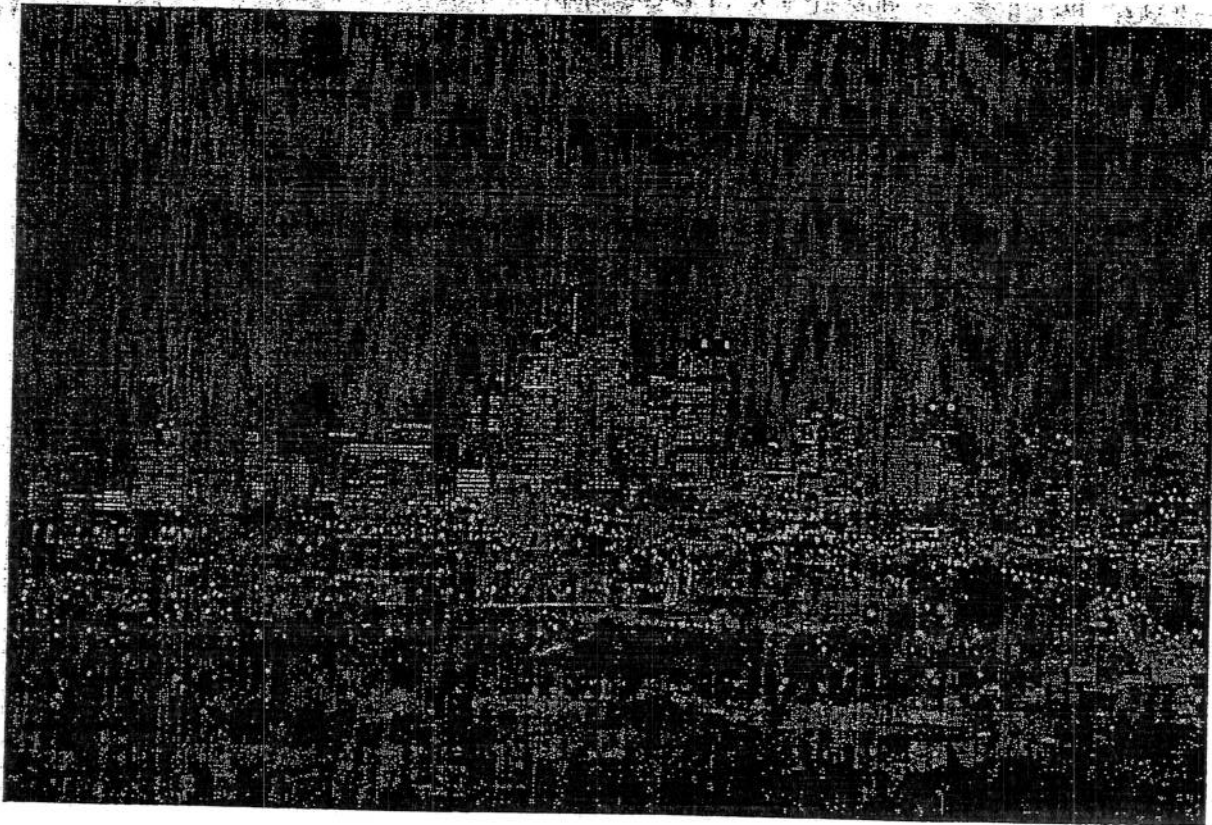
**Objective:** *The City and County of Los Angeles Should Both Declare Their Intentions to Become "Hunger-Free Communities" by the End of 2009 and Identify a Timeline and Series of Benchmarks to Achieve the Goal of Being Hunger-Free*

Similar to pledges that can guide policy and action such as making Los Angeles a "green city," the commitment to a hunger-free community should be made by our public officials, residents, business community, unions, philanthropic organizations, and colleagues in the anti-hunger and

food justice movements. This declaration should also include measurable goals, with a specific timetable and a set of benchmarks, with zero hunger goals as the framework guiding action and policy change. Annual or bi-annual reports should document progress or lack of progress toward that goal.

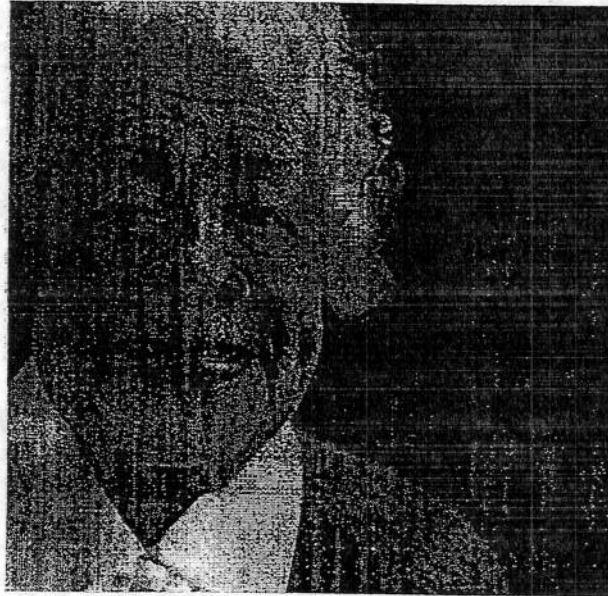
#### **Action Plan**

- 1 Adopt uniform standards on food safety so that the City and County can donate surplus food from its facilities to help bolster the supply of emergency food in Los Angeles available to food insecure residents, and to set an example for the businesses in the City and County to donate.
- 2 Institute the policies to make Los Angeles a leader in obesity reduction and disease prevention. As noted throughout this Blueprint, several studies have now identified higher rates of obesity and diet-related health problems among those who are most food insecure. Hunger and food insecurity are problems of insufficient food as well as an abundance of the wrong kinds of food; that is, foods that are calorie dense but nutrient poor (and often the least expensive, due to subsidies in the food system<sup>9</sup>).



<sup>9</sup> The Federal Government provides agricultural subsidies geared toward the production of calories, not necessarily nutrients. This encourages farmers to grow commodity crops such as corn, soy and wheat in great volume, which are then processed into calorie-dense foods such as fast food and other unhealthful food items, like cookies and soda. Studies have shown that foods made from these subsidized crops cost five times less per calorie than unsubsidized food such as fruits and vegetables.

- 3 Create policies to enhance and increase opportunities for supermarket development. This includes zoning policies, reducing parking requirements in transit-dependent neighborhoods, establishing linkage fees or other subsidy mechanisms for inner city market development, and encouraging community-food store partnerships to facilitate market development and provide jobs for those communities.
- 4 Establish a community garden and edible landscape policy that addresses barriers which prevent the development, expansion and sustainability of community gardens. This includes addressing water rates and hook-ups, use of vacant or underutilized public land, and interim land use policies for unused private land, including brownfields.<sup>10</sup>
- 5 Partner with school districts to encourage and sustain gardens in more schools similar to programs established along those lines in other regions and cities.
- 6 Begin an educational campaign on The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, the 1996 federal law that makes it easier for businesses to donate to food banks and food rescue programs. It specifically protects donors from liability when donating to nonprofit organizations and protects donors from civil and criminal liability should a product donated in good faith later cause harm to a needy recipient.



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<sup>10</sup> In urban planning terms, a brownfield is a redevelopment site that may be desirable for urban agriculture but is too contaminated by urban or commercial pollutants to safely grow food. Using funds from EPA, states and other sources, communities can assess sites and clean brownfields, creating safe spaces where people can grow their own food or buy locally-grown food.

**Objective:** *Make Healthy Food and Hunger-Free Community Goals a Direct Part of the Policy and Governance System for Los Angeles by establishing a Food Policy Council*

Los Angeles has no food department or policy-making infrastructure at either the City or County level, and there is no integrating body to bring together the County, City, schools and NGOs. These are all key players who need to work together if ending hunger in Los Angeles is to be achieved. Without a strong policy component to address many of the goals here, the approach to these issues will remain fragmented and marginal.

**Action Plan**

- 1 Create an integrated Food Policy Council incorporating the Cities, County, School Districts and NGOs. The council would build operating collaborations among existing anti-hunger organizations to expand their collective access to nutritious food, advocate and develop new policies for local and regional governments, school districts and other public bodies, help further secure and coordinate the distribution of donated resources from businesses, healthcare organizations, faith groups, and the philanthropic community, communicate the consequences of hunger and malnutrition to the community at-large, and make food insecurity a vivid part of the region's consciousness.

**GOAL #2: IMPROVE FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

Numerous studies have shown that the enormous benefits USDA-funded programs provide are the most significant tool available to reduce hunger and food insecurity. These programs can be so effective that when fully funded, the U.S. government cut poverty in half (19%-11%) in just under ten years (1964-1973) before it stopped aggressively addressing the issue in the 1980's.

As Joel Berg, a former senior official in the USDA under President Clinton, details in his book *All You Can Eat: How Hungry is America?*, the U.S. government could virtually end hunger in America by modernizing and expanding the federal food safety net by 41%. It would cost \$25 billion a year, a relatively small sum when compared to the total cost of hunger, which researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health conservatively estimate at \$90 billion a year in their study, *The Economic Cost of Domestic Hunger: Estimated Annual Burden to the United States*.

A focused and sustained effort by the federal government to improve and expand food assistance also depends on state and local governments to enact the policies to ensure the smooth administration of these benefits.

**Objective:** *Ensure Full Participation and Increased Levels, as Well as New Support for and Protection of Federal Nutrition Programs*

A major commitment needs to be made to ensure full participation in the federal nutrition programs. According to the USDA, for every \$1 invested in the food stamp program, \$1.84 in local economic benefits is generated.

County and City governments can play a key role in advocating for improved State and Federal policies to extend eligibility to more households and increase resources. Most immediately, local government can expand accessibility to programs and services, monitor participation, promote awareness and integrate applications for nutrition assistance with other public services.

The largest nutrition programs in Los Angeles County, in order, are:

- Food Stamps
- School Meals
- Emergency Food Assistance Program
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Child Care Food Program
- Summer Food Service Program

#### **Action Plan**

- 1** At the Federal Level, increase food stamp funding, benefit levels and expand eligibility; improve WIC with increased support for fresh fruits and vegetables for children in the WIC program and fresh food packets for WIC-only stores.
- 2** At the State level, establish mechanisms, programs and support for groups seeking to overcome barriers for participation; pass legislation to modernize California's Food Stamp Program.
- 3** At the Local level, facilitate initiatives to connect eligible individuals utilizing emergency food services to the food stamp program and other food assistance programs like WIC.





**Objective: Strengthen School Nutrition Programs**

The school lunch and breakfast programs provide crucial nutrition to nearly one million children across Los Angeles County daily. These programs also teach eating habits and can establish appropriate dietary patterns for a lifetime. Significant changes are needed at the federal, state and local level to ensure programs reach eligible children and instill eating behaviors that prevent early onset of overweight. Students need menus that promote the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, adequate time to eat, and nutrition education. There has been significant progress in recent years to eliminate sodas and snack foods, from school grounds, but much more work is needed to ensure schools create nutrition-friendly environments that help students develop healthy habits for life.

**Action Plan**

- 1 Include Universal Feeding/Paperless Opt-In in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 2009. This would offer free breakfast and lunch to every child at a school where there is a large number of children and families in poverty without the paperwork to prove eligibility. It should be made a national program and therefore available to LAUSD where already 78% of children already qualify for the free and reduced lunch program.
- 2 Increase the Federal government's reimbursement rate for school meals. This would allow schools to spend more than the average of \$1.00 they currently spend for meals, providing more latitude to develop healthier menus that children will eat.
- 3 Increase the availability of fresh, local and healthy food for the school cafeteria through Farm to School programs in Los Angeles schools. A first step in that direction would be support in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation for mandatory funding for Section 122 of the Farm Bill to provide resources for farm to school.
- 4 Expand school breakfast programs, including "universal" and in-classroom programs in all low-income areas so that all children can receive breakfast at no charge to ensure that many more of them begin the day with the nutrition they need to succeed. Free meal eligibility should also be expanded so that children from households with incomes up to 185% of the national poverty line can receive meals at no charge.
- 5 Eliminate unhealthy foods from school grounds, through more effective implementation of LAUSD policies. This includes the elimination of the candy and junk food available in vending machines, student stores and school fundraisers for sports teams and clubs.



### **GOAL #3: INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD**

Hunger and food insecurity do not result from insufficient food production but rather from distribution issues, whether that be the physical distribution of food (food deserts and food swamps) or the distribution of resources for individuals to attain food (poverty, unemployment, lack of transportation, etc.). By addressing the gaps in our local food distribution systems, including increasing the capacity of our emergency food network, we can begin to bring the types of quality and nutritious food to those who need it.

#### ***Objective: Ensure Fresh and Healthy Food Sources for Emergency Food Providers***

Emergency food providers are often the place of last resort for the hungry and the food insecure, including those who might not qualify or be able to access key food programs such as Food Stamps. Emergency food providers need additional support to ensure that they can offer fresh and healthy food to their clients.

#### ***Action Plan***

- 1** Increase and help facilitate the availability of fresh, local, and nutritious foods for food providers. With the increased attention about food and nutrition, a range of initiatives has been adopted to make fresh, local, and nutritious foods an integral part of the food supply flowing into the emergency food system. Currently, about 20-25% of food supply meets those criteria and a target of 50% of fresh, local, and nutritious foods for emergency food sources should be established to frame efforts and build support to meet that goal.
- 2** Enhance and support gleaning programs at local farms to supply emergency food providers. There is an untapped surplus of "edible but not sellable" food close at hand in the Los Angeles region. Much of this surplus is highly nutritious, including fresh produce, dairy products and lean meats. In addition to securing those surpluses, efforts to capture and glean fresh and healthy food from farms, private and public gardens and fruit trees, should be increased.
- 3** Develop more coordination, distribution capacity and logistics between the hospitality industry and emergency food providers. The lack of communication between the food service industry and food rescue programs leads to an annual waste of over 1.5 million tons of edible, usable food by the hospitality industry in California. To put this waste in very stark terms, the amount of perfectly edible food that is thrown away over the course of the year could be used to provide one ton of food for every single food insecure person in Los Angeles.

**Objective:** *Increase Funding for Emergency Food Providers*

During the economic crisis, the emergency food system has been needed more than ever and is currently stretched to capacity. Food pantries receive some government-funded food assistance but do not receive operating funds. The philanthropic sector in Los Angeles should to meet this gap and raise increased funds for these programs.

**Action Plan**

**1** Individuals and families should continue to provide the much needed food and cash contributions and local corporations and foundations should target increased funding to the operational needs of the emergency food system. Many emergency food providers need help purchasing refrigeration units to store fresh foods and vehicles to transport product. Increased monetary donations or direct donations of such equipment would increase the amount of fresh foods that many local food banks and pantries could handle.



**Objective:** *Provide Healthy, Fresh and Affordable Food Throughout Los Angeles Neighborhoods and Communities*

It is difficult to consume fresh and healthy food, like the baseline recommendation of five fruits and vegetables a day, if one cannot access such food in the neighborhood. Farmers' markets, supermarkets, and healthy food in corner stores, should be available in every community, especially those communities that not only have limited or no source of fresh and healthy food but are plagued by a surplus of unhealthy food options such as fast food restaurants.

**Action Plan**

- 1** Los Angeles should further expand and develop a farmers' market program that would address barriers and enhance opportunities for new and sustainable markets in more communities, including those with limited access to fresh and local foods.
- 2** Ensure that farmers' markets in all areas are capable of accepting food stamps through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards and adopt a voucher program that would double the value of the purchases at farmers' markets (see The Wholesome Wave Foundation).
- 3** Los Angeles should help facilitate distribution and logistical mechanisms to support regional farmers and enhance their ability to bring fresh produce into low-income communities. This could include the development of a public-private partnership to establish a Farmers' Market Hub to serve as a central location and distribution point to link local and fresh food to local community institutions and organizations.
- 4** Develop mobile food distribution programs, like the MI Neighborhood Food Movers, a pilot program in Detroit, that bring fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables to neighborhoods without access to such foods. A partnership with a supermarket chain and a local government could help keep the prices of fresh foods competitive with other big-box food retailers.



**Objective:** *Engage the Los Angeles Community in Increased Volunteer Efforts to Address the Hunger Crisis*

The volunteer sector in Los Angeles needs to greatly expand its efforts in support of the emergency food system. Government action alone is not enough. Los Angeles needs more people to volunteer for food organizations, food pantries and soup kitchens as many of these organizations are struggling to meet the increased demand. The outreach necessary to connect eligible people to institutional food benefits such as Food Stamps and WIC, presents a huge opportunity for the volunteer sector.

**Action Plan**

- 1 Volunteer at a local food bank, food pantry or feeding program. With increased volunteer capacity food pantries can stay open longer, making it possible for many of the working poor to make it to food pantries during off hours. Food banks, soup kitchens and other food recyclers need more drivers to pick up food donations from restaurants, supermarkets and farmers markets. Individuals who do not have the time to give can help by making charitable food donations.

**Objective:** *Strengthen and Expand Fresh Food Access and Anti-Hunger Programs through community-based organizations*

**Action Plan**

- 1 Provide support for community organizations such as senior groups, immigrant support groups and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) related groups to develop food programs for their constituencies, some of whom who might not be eligible for Federal nutrition assistance programs. Partnerships between such groups and emergency food providers would help get food to those most directly impacted by food insecurity. Furthermore, this could include technical assistance by emergency food providers and other food groups on how to develop food sources and food programs. This should also include support to connect those who are eligible but not participating in Federal food assistance programs.
- 2 Develop nutrition education programs and nutrition educator staff members to conduct outreach, create connections and partnerships with other community groups engaged in congregate feeding, low-income health care, or other corollary programs where needy populations can be reached. This could be modeled after the innovative Promotoras de Salud program developed through Our Bodies Ourselves' Latina Health Initiative, which trains peer-health educators (promotoras) to provide immigrant women with family-focused, culturally appropriate health education and assist them in getting the care they need.



- 3 Develop similar, innovative programs such as the Fresh Food Financing Initiative in Pennsylvania and New York, which provides support and incentives for new stores and healthy and fresh foods in communities that lack access to fresh, affordable, and healthy food.
- 4 Encourage affordable housing developers and community development corporations to further incorporate food programs linking residents to food assistance programs, establishing community and container gardens at housing sites, and creating green teams and health and nutrition educators as part of a Community Development Corporation's (CDC) community outreach work.
- 5 Encourage the further development of CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) and Market Basket programs for low-income subscribers and participants that could be facilitated through community-based organizations. Subsidy programs and distribution systems could be developed to make CSAs more affordable and available in underserved communities.

**Objective:** *Create Gardens and Edible Landscapes Throughout Los Angeles Neighborhoods*

A garden at the White House has been a clarion call about the importance of growing one's food for its multiple benefits. That initiative should be extended to neighborhoods, schools and institutions.



### **Action Plan**

- 1 Start community gardens and edible landscapes on available land (for example, on hospital grounds, on the front lawn of City Hall and in container boxes and yards throughout our neighborhoods). They will be a reminder of the hungry among us, provide food for those in need (studies report that every \$1 invested in a community garden plot yields \$6 worth of produce) and assist in the greening of Los Angeles.

**Objective:** *Support efforts to create a sustainable food system in Los Angeles*

Given the connections between food production, food waste and the environment, a more sustainable food environment in Los Angeles would help us secure our long-term food security. While our conventional food system is wildly abundant, it is also heavily dependent on fossil fuels and as energy prices rise, so do food prices, leading to more food insecurity, as families with limited resources adjust by purchasing less food. A sustainable food system in Los Angeles could localize food production, consumption and systems of distribution, guarding us against the vulnerabilities in the conventional food system.

### **Action Plan**

- 1 Map the Los Angeles foodshed to determine the consumption habits and patterns and to identify the food sources and food routes in Los Angeles County. This would inform the development of city planning initiatives and policies, particularly in the realm of land-use, transportation, food access and smart growth.
- 2 Support the development of a green food infrastructure, urban farming projects and other aspects of the sustainable food movement. Urban agriculture projects would create jobs, provide the fresh produce, foster a deeper connection to food and help develop the healthy eating habits that many communities need. A useful first step would be to identify and facilitate community organizations with the remediation of brownfields throughout Los Angeles.
- 3 Expand composting programs throughout the City and County, including educating the public on the variety of non-food items that are compostable. Include families that live in apartments in the next stage of the food-waste pilot program that currently reaches only 8,700 households and 800 restaurants.



# How Can It Get Done – Assigning Responsibilities

*The day that hunger is eradicated from the earth, there will be the greatest spiritual explosion the world has ever known. Humanity cannot imagine the joy that will burst into the world on the day of that great revolution.*

— Fredrico García Lorca

As described earlier, The National Anti-Hunger Organizations (NAHO) collaborated to develop the national *Blueprint to End Hunger* in 2008. The document provides a national template for action at the Federal and State levels, which this local Blueprint wholeheartedly endorses. We envision this Blueprint to be a companion piece to the national *Blueprint to End Hunger* and we urge interested parties to explore their recommendations (for a link to the national Blueprint, please see the resources section on page 43).

Ending hunger in Los Angeles is possible but it can only be done through the complete mobilization of all of the components of civic Los Angeles. It is a tall order and a worthy one and here are efforts individuals and organizations can undertake to make a hunger free Los Angeles a reality.

## **INDIVIDUALS**

Individuals can participate in action and organized efforts as well as get involved in particular acts contributing to this movement for a hunger-free community. Individuals can be part of the new call for community service that has become central to President Obama's vision of change in America. Economic recovery, as the [www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov) web site puts it, is also about what we as individuals are able to do in our community. And we can do it: Become advocates, volunteer, join a food project, plant a garden in your community, help people get connected to food assistance programs, join others in this movement for change.

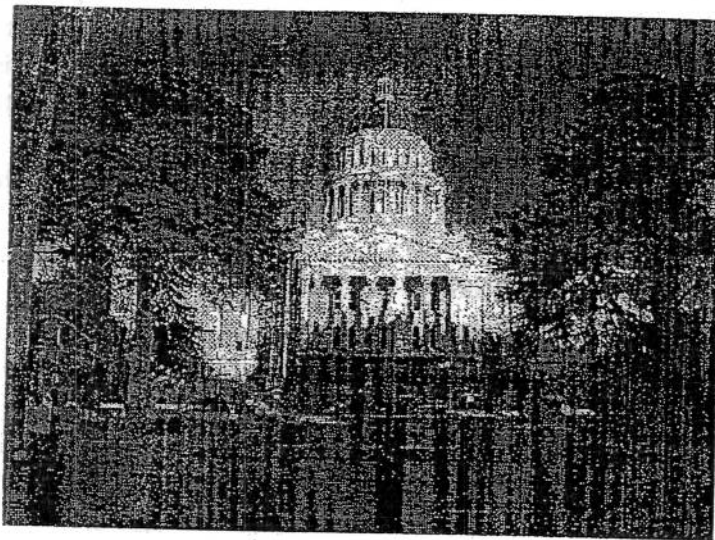
## **COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS**

Community-based organizations can be engaged at multiple levels – undertaking neighborhood community and school food assessments, advocating for new fresh and healthy local food sources, working with local food groups and providers, facilitating outreach to increase participation in food assistance programs such as food stamps and WIC, or by planting gardens, among many other neighborhood-based opportunities. They can also educate policymakers and other stakeholders on the link between public health, hunger and community

planning of the food environment (community gardens, farmers' markets and supermarkets). They can also encourage and participate in strategies to establish farmers' markets, community gardens, food cooperatives, urban farming, gleaning programs and other innovative programs that can reduce hunger. These groups can also promote food donation and the elimination of food waste.

### **LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT**

Leaders of State and Local governments must continue to draw attention to the problems of hunger and food insecurity, its scope and causes, and expand the engagement of our public and private sectors to aid in its solutions. Policymakers and government officials need to incorporate food and hunger issues as part of the policy process and create greater integration of those policies. A first step would be to create a linked County and City Food Policy Council that could also work with other public entities such as school districts and the non-profit sector. County and City agencies need to directly facilitate expanding participation in food assistance programs by creating on site enrollment opportunities in County and City offices, facilitating and supporting the training of people such as food and nutrition peer-educators to expand such outreach, and establishing mechanisms such as data banks to link non-profits with government programs and entities. Furthermore, they can create incentive programs for landowners of vacant lots and/or enact zoning laws to stimulate the growth healthy food retail establishments, such as food cooperatives or farmers markets. Finally, local government can explore fast food moratoriums in certain neighborhoods until ordinances and land use policies that support investment in healthier food resources in food deserts are adopted.



### **BUSINESSES**

Los Angeles businesses, large and small, should work to improve access to healthy, fresh, and nutritious foods for their employees and participate in food programs and activities in the communities in which they operate, whether it is in the community, city, or regional level. Businesses can also establish programs at their work sites to facilitate enabling their workers who qualify to sign up for food assistance programs.

### **LABOR ORGANIZATIONS**

Labor organizations, including unions, should encourage their members to become involved in anti-hunger and healthy, fresh and nutritious food advocacy. Unions that represent workers in the food industry, such as supermarket workers, can also help advocate for and support new market development in communities where full service markets are not available. Unions can also ensure that their members are aware of all food assistance benefit programs.

### **SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GROUPS**

Groups involved in social and economic justice play a key role in anti-hunger advocacy because adequate wages and affordable housing are essential for household food security.

Given the connections between the environment, hunger, food production and food waste, environmentalists that join the anti-hunger movement will augment a growing sustainable food movement while concurrently advancing their own advocacy agendas.

### **HEALTH-CARE ORGANIZATIONS**

Reducing health care costs is possible through prevention of health disparities. Improved diet and physical activity can prevent overweight and its attendant conditions of diabetes and heart disease. Ending food insecurity and hunger is a key first step to improving dietary behaviors. Action steps to refer families to nutrition assistance resources and steps to improve health habits can become part of medical training as well as direct engagement through health institutions themselves.

### **IMMIGRANT SUPPORT AND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS GROUPS**

Los Angeles is a city of immigrants and all too often, immigrants become food insecure when programs that might otherwise provide that food security are not available or barriers to participation are significant. Immigrant support and rights groups should develop partnerships and/or programs connecting recent immigrants to benefits. Immigrant farmers can also play a central role by helping with urban agriculture projects. There are also a number of

programs that connect and help immigrant farmers get produce from these community farms to farmers' markets, particularly in low income communities. Not only does this foster the self-sufficiency of the immigrant farmers and contributes to the food diversity of the region, but it also helps to develop local, sustainable food systems as well.

### **FAITH COMMUNITIES**

The charge to provide food for people who are hungry is central to all religions. Our churches, mosques and synagogues already do great work in this area and more can be done. They can play a critical role in mobilizing their membership to be food advocates and volunteers for food banks and food pantries. We encourage faith leaders to make the call to action of this Blueprint a core component of the social justice works of their communities. On the macro-level, a large city-wide, coordinated, interfaith commitment to address hunger, food insecurity and healthy food access is needed and such an effort could make a huge impact on the issue.

### **STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND TEACHERS**

School-based food advocacy is crucial in helping transform school food environments (cafeteria food and competitive food issues). Groups like the LAUSD-focused Healthy School Food Coalition can serve as a model for engaging these school-related constituencies.



### THE MEDIA

The media can play and have in the past played a key role in telling the story of hunger and food insecurity in Los Angeles to educate, build awareness and outrage, and inspire community and individual action. There are many stories regarding hunger in Los Angeles that should be covered. Those doing good works should be similarly highlighted. Hunger and poverty cannot be treated as chronic annoyances – like traffic – which do not merit constant coverage. The media can also help make people aware of the benefits available to them.





### **PHILANTHROPIC GROUPS**

There is an enormous need to increase the level of private and public funding for advocacy and program and policy changes. Foundations can also be directly engaged in policy-related program expansion – for example, the Wholesome Wave Foundation in the Mid-Atlantic region doubles the amount of Food Stamp, WIC and Senior Nutrition benefits at specific locations.



### **ANTI-HUNGER, COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS**

Anti-hunger, community food security, and food justice groups have been at the forefront of food advocacy in Los Angeles. These groups need to be able to further develop into an organized network and help reach out to other groups and constituencies. The groups can also ensure that a language of individual and community empowerment rather than a language of victimization becomes part of all anti-hunger and food security advocacy.



## A Call to Action and Pledge

*Lord, to those who hunger, give bread.*

*And to those who have bread,  
give the hunger for justice.*

— Latin American prayer

In the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, we find ourselves in dangerous and challenging times: people are losing jobs, families are losing their homes, and many are falling below the poverty line. The state's fiscal crisis and draconian cuts to essential income supports and programs are deepening and extending a major hunger crisis with over one million people in our community regularly confronting hunger.

How we respond to them will define who we are as a civic community and as a people.

If we, as a civic community, allow hunger to continue, we are settling for the status quo. We are implicitly saying that our children do not need to learn, because they can't if they are hungry; that our workers should not be productive at work; that our grandparents should not be able to eat *and* have their medications.

The people who suffer from hunger and food insecurity are not only the poor, the elderly, the sick or the young. They are our relatives, friends, colleagues and acquaintances and many of them suffer silently. This is not simply their problem; it's our problem.

Ending hunger is possible. The right to food is a fundamental human right and the need to eliminate hunger is the essential goal of any just society. Together, we can and must work towards eradicating the injustice of hunger. Join with us in a pledge to make Los Angeles a decent place to live for everyone; so that one day, we may all break bread together with healthful, fresh and quality food. Together, we can prove once and for all, that we still live in a city of angels.



## **OUR PLEDGE**

The current state of affairs is unacceptable and we – in one unified, righteous voice – endorse the recommendations in the Blueprint and pledge to make recommendations in the Blueprint happen by:

- Talking about the hunger crisis in Los Angeles with our friends, colleagues and neighbors
- Participating in legislative advocacy, including letter writing, phone calls and visits to our lawmakers
- Identifying and inviting leaders of our communities to attend upcoming anti-hunger events
- Organizing food drives on behalf of our communities
- Organizing our friends and neighbors into volunteer groups at local food banks, food pantries or anti-hunger organizations
- Planting food gardens and contributing our harvest to local food pantries
- Contributing to anti-hunger causes in Los Angeles (to make a micro-donation, go to [www.FedUpWithHunger.org](http://www.FedUpWithHunger.org) and consider forwarding the site to 10 friends)
- Signing the pledge at [www.FedUpWithHunger.org/pledge](http://www.FedUpWithHunger.org/pledge) and forwarding it to 10 friends

## Glossary\*

**After-School Snack Program** – The After-School Snack Program provides nutritious snacks and meals to low-income children participating in after-school programs. It is run under the auspices of both the National School Lunch Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

**Brownfield** – A brownfield site is real property, where the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. These sites can be transformed through a number of soil remediation techniques that are available, increasing the amount of arable, urban land.

**Child and Adult Care Food Program** – The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal program that provides healthy meals and snacks to children and adults (elderly people unable to care for themselves) in day care settings.

**Commodity Supplemental Food Program** – The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) works to improve the health of low-income children, mothers and other people at least 60 years old by supplementing their diets with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodity foods. USDA administers CSFP at the federal level, providing food and administrative funds to states, though not all states participate.

**Congregate Meal Sites** – Congregate Meal Sites provide government subsidized prepared meals at a local area kitchen, typically part of a senior center.

**Elderly food programs** – Federal nutrition programs that specifically target at-risk elderly people and include home-delivered meals and congregate meals programs, which provide meals at central facilities in group settings.

**Emergency food program** – Emergency food programs distribute donated food items to hungry people through avenues such as shelters, soup kitchens and food pantries, which usually are supplied by food banks. Such programs typically are run by private, nonprofit community organizations.

**Food bank** – A charitable organization that solicits, receives, inventories, stores and donates food and grocery products pursuant to grocery industry and appropriate regulatory standards. These products are distributed to charitable human service agencies, which provide the products directly to clients.

**Food delivery program** – A program, such as Project Chicken Soup or Project Angel Food, that delivers food and groceries to those in need, including home-delivered meals.

**Food desert** – A food desert is an urban neighborhood with little to no access to mainstream supermarkets and the types of food needed to maintain a healthy diet (see *food swamp*).

**Food insecurity** – The limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods, including involuntarily cutting back on meals, food portions or not knowing the source of the next meal (see *Hunger*).

**Food pantry** – Nonprofit organizations (typically small in size), such as religious institutions or social service agencies, that receive donated food items and distribute them to hungry people.

**Food security** – Access to enough food for an active, healthy life. At a minimum, food security includes: (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging or other coping strategies).

*\* This glossary is from the National Anti-Hunger Organization's Blueprint to End Hunger. We have added a few entries specific to our document, such as "Food Desert," "Food Swamp," "Service Planning Area" and a few others.*

**Food Stamp Program** – The federal Food Stamp Program serves as the first line of defense against hunger. It enables low-income families to buy nutritious food with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Food stamp recipients are able to buy eligible food items in authorized retail food stores. The program is the cornerstone of the federal food assistance programs and provides crucial support to low-income households and those making the transition from welfare to work. This program was recently renamed The Supplemental Nutrition Access Program (SNAP). For administrative purposes, California continues to refer to the program colloquially as Food Stamps.

**Food swamp** – The term food swamp was introduced in a 2009 National Poverty Working Group paper to describe districts and neighborhoods that are overflowing with bad calories and unhealthy food options.

**Hunger** – The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a recurrent or involuntary lack of access to food. Many scientists consider hunger to be chronically inadequate nutritional intake due to low incomes (i.e., people do not have to experience pain to be hungry from a nutritional perspective).

**Malnutrition** – A serious health impairment that results from substandard nutrient intake. Malnutrition may result from a lack of food, a chronic shortage of key nutrients, or impaired absorption or metabolism associated with chronic conditions or disease.

**Obesity** – An abnormal accumulation of body fat that may result in health impairments. Obesity is generally defined by the National Institutes of Health as having body weight that is more than 20% above the high range for ideal body weight.

**Service Planning Area (SPA)** – Los Angeles County is divided into eight "Service Planning Areas" (SPA's) for health care planning purposes. Each SPA has an Area Health Office that is responsible for planning public health and clinical services according to the health needs of local communities.

**School Lunch and Breakfast Programs** – The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs are federally assisted meal programs operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. They provide nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free meals to children each school day.

**Soup kitchen** – An organization whose primary purpose is to provide prepared meals served in a local agency kitchen for hungry people.

**Summer Food Service Program** – The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides reimbursements to schools, local government agencies and community-based organizations for meals and snacks served to children during the summer months. Geared toward low-income children, the SFSP is the single largest federal resource available for local sponsors who want to combine a feeding program with a summer activity program.

**Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** – WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods, as well as nutrition counseling, to low-income, nutritionally at-risk pregnant women, infants and children up to age 5.

**The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)** – Under TEFAP, commodity foods are made available by the USDA to states. States provide the food to local agencies that are selected, usually food banks, which distribute the food to soup kitchens and food pantries that directly serve the public.

**The Good Samaritan Food Donation Act** – A national law that protects food donors, including businesses, individuals, and nonprofit feeding programs, who are not "grossly negligent," in making food donations. The law further augments the liability protections offered by state and local jurisdictions.

**Undernutrition** – The consequence of consuming food that is inadequate in quantity and/or nutritional quality.

# Resources

The National Blueprint to End Hunger

[www.bit.ly/National\\_BP](http://www.bit.ly/National_BP) (pdf)

## ***Food Security Movements in Other Cities***

San Francisco  
New York

[www.bit.ly/SF\\_Food\\_Policy](http://www.bit.ly/SF_Food_Policy)

[www.bit.ly/NY\\_Food\\_MBOP](http://www.bit.ly/NY_Food_MBOP) (pdf)

[www.bit.ly/NY\\_food\\_reso](http://www.bit.ly/NY_food_reso) (doc)

[www.bit.ly/chicago\\_food\\_reso](http://www.bit.ly/chicago_food_reso) (pdf)

[www.bit.ly/MSP\\_unitedway](http://www.bit.ly/MSP_unitedway) (pdf)

Chicago

Minnesota/St. Paul

## ***Statistics, Data and Research***

Healthy City

[www.healthycity.org](http://www.healthycity.org)

UCLA California Health Interview Survey

[www.chis.ucla.edu](http://www.chis.ucla.edu)

USC California Demographic Futures Project

[www.bit.ly/USC\\_SPPD](http://www.bit.ly/USC_SPPD)

California Department of Finance

[www.bit.ly/CA\\_Dept\\_of\\_Fin](http://www.bit.ly/CA_Dept_of_Fin)

California Employment Development Department

[www.bit.ly/DOF\\_Demo\\_Rep](http://www.bit.ly/DOF_Demo_Rep)

California Department of Public Health

[www.bit.ly/Labor\\_Market](http://www.bit.ly/Labor_Market)

US Census Bureau

[www.bit.ly/Pop\\_Data](http://www.bit.ly/Pop_Data)

[www.bit.ly/Pub\\_health](http://www.bit.ly/Pub_health)

US Bureau of Economic Statistics

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

[www.bit.ly/Data\\_Tools](http://www.bit.ly/Data_Tools)

[www.bea.gov](http://www.bea.gov)

US Bureau of Labor Statistics

[www.bit.ly/BEA\\_tools](http://www.bit.ly/BEA_tools)

[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

US Department of Agriculture

[www.bit.ly/BLS\\_tools](http://www.bit.ly/BLS_tools)

[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

## ***Community Gardening and Urban Agriculture***

Urban Agriculture and Community Food Security

[www.bit.ly/Urb\\_Ag\\_Primer](http://www.bit.ly/Urb_Ag_Primer) (pdf)

The American Community Gardening Association

[www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org)

UC Cooperative Extension, Los Angeles County

[www.celosangeles.ucdavis.edu](http://www.celosangeles.ucdavis.edu)

Los Angeles Community Garden Council

[www.lagardencouncil.org/](http://www.lagardencouncil.org/)

EPA Brownfield Remediation Guide

[www.bit.ly/EPA\\_bf](http://www.bit.ly/EPA_bf) (pdf)

## ***Advocacy Efforts***

### ***National***

The Alliance to End Hunger

[www.alliancetoendhunger.org](http://www.alliancetoendhunger.org)

Association of Nutrition Services Agencies

[www.ansanutrition.org](http://www.ansanutrition.org)

Bread for the World

[www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)

Center On Budget Policies and Policy Priorities

[www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org)

Community Food Security Coalition

[www.foodsecurity.org/ca\\_losangeles.html](http://www.foodsecurity.org/ca_losangeles.html)

Community Health Councils

[www.chc-inc.org](http://www.chc-inc.org)

The Congressional Hunger Center

[www.hungercenter.org](http://www.hungercenter.org)

The End Hunger Network

[www.endhunger.com](http://www.endhunger.com)

Feeding America

[www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)

The Food Research and Action Center

[www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)

Hunger No More

[www.hungernomore.org](http://www.hungernomore.org)

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

[www.jewishpublicaffairs.org](http://www.jewishpublicaffairs.org)

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger:

[www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org)

RESULTS

[www.results.org](http://www.results.org)

Share Our Strength

[www.strength.org](http://www.strength.org)

Society of St. Andrew

[www.endhunger.org](http://www.endhunger.org)

World Hunger Year (WHY)

[www.worldhungeryear.org](http://www.worldhungeryear.org)

#### *State*

CA Association of Food Banks  
CA Association of Nutrition & Activity Programs  
California Food Policy Advocates  
California Hunger Action Coalition

[www.cafoodbanks.org](http://www.cafoodbanks.org)  
[www.can-act.net](http://www.can-act.net)  
[www.cfpa.net](http://www.cfpa.net)  
[www.hungeraction.net](http://www.hungeraction.net)

#### *Los Angeles County*

Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice  
Hope-Net  
Hunger Action Los Angeles  
LA Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness  
LA Community Action Network  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank  
Meet Each Need with Dignity (MEND)  
Progressive Jewish Alliance  
Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles  
United Way LA  
Weingart Institute

[www.cluela.org](http://www.cluela.org)  
[www.hope-net.info](http://www.hope-net.info)  
[www.hungeractionla.org](http://www.hungeractionla.org)  
[www.lacehh.org](http://www.lacehh.org)  
[www.cangress.org](http://www.cangress.org)  
[www.lafightshunger.org](http://www.lafightshunger.org)  
[www.mendpoverty.org](http://www.mendpoverty.org)  
[www.pjalliance.org](http://www.pjalliance.org)  
[www.see-la.org](http://www.see-la.org)  
[www.unitedwayla.org](http://www.unitedwayla.org)  
[www.wiengart.org](http://www.wiengart.org)

#### *Local / Grass Roots*

Food Not Bombs  
Homeless Healthcare  
San Fernando Valley Interfaith Council  
Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition

[www.foodnotbombs.net](http://www.foodnotbombs.net)  
[www.hhcla.org](http://www.hhcla.org)  
[www.vic-la.org](http://www.vic-la.org)  
[www.westsideshelter.org](http://www.westsideshelter.org)

#### *Schools*

California Farm to School Network  
Network for a Healthy California – LAUSD

[www.cafarmtoschool.org](http://www.cafarmtoschool.org)  
[www.healthylausd.net](http://www.healthylausd.net)

#### *Volunteer Opportunities*

Angel Harvest  
Catholic Charities Los Angeles  
Downtown Women's Center  
Food Forward  
Food On Foot  
Fred Jordan Mission  
Frontline Foundation  
Global Kindness  
Greater West Hollywood Food Coalition  
Help The Children: Santa Clarita  
Hope-Net  
JFS-SOVA Community Food and Resource Program  
Los Angeles Catholic Worker  
Los Angeles Family Housing (LAFH)  
Los Angeles Mission  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank  
M.E.N.D. (Meet Each Need with Dignity)  
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger  
Midnight Mission  
North Valley Caring Services, Inc.  
Ocean Park Community Center Access Center  
P.A.T.H. (People Assisting The Homeless)  
Project Angel Food  
Project Chicken Soup  
Rescue Mission Alliance  
St. Joseph Center / Bread and Roses Café  
St. Vincent Meals On Wheels  
Salvation Army: Harbor Light  
SECONDS Hunger Relief  
South Antelope Valley Emergency Services  
Touch of Kindness / Tomchei Shabbos  
United Rescue Mission  
Valley Beth Shalom Food Bank  
Valley Interfaith Council  
Westside Food Bank

[www.angelharvest.org](http://www.angelharvest.org)  
[www.catholiccharitiesla.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesla.org)  
[www.dwcweb.org](http://www.dwcweb.org)  
[www.FoodForward.org](http://www.FoodForward.org)  
[www.foodonfoot.org](http://www.foodonfoot.org)  
[www.fjm.org](http://www.fjm.org)  
[www.frontline-foundation.org](http://www.frontline-foundation.org)  
[www.myglobalkindness.org](http://www.myglobalkindness.org)  
[www.gwhfc.org](http://www.gwhfc.org)  
[www.helpthechildren.org/index.php](http://www.helpthechildren.org/index.php)  
[www.hope-net.info](http://www.hope-net.info)  
[www.jfsla.org/sova](http://www.jfsla.org/sova)  
[www.lacatholicworker.org](http://www.lacatholicworker.org)  
[www.lafh.org](http://www.lafh.org)  
[www.losangelesmission.org](http://www.losangelesmission.org)  
[www.lafoodbank.org](http://www.lafoodbank.org)  
[www.mendpoverty.org](http://www.mendpoverty.org)  
[www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org)  
[www.midnightmission.org](http://www.midnightmission.org)  
[www.nvsinc.org](http://www.nvsinc.org)  
[www.opcc.net](http://www.opcc.net)  
[www.epath.org](http://www.epath.org)  
[www.projectangelfood.org](http://www.projectangelfood.org)  
[www.projectchickensoup.org](http://www.projectchickensoup.org)  
[www.erescuemission.com](http://www.erescuemission.com)  
[www.stjosephctr.org](http://www.stjosephctr.org)  
[www.stvincentmow.org](http://www.stvincentmow.org)  
[www.laharborlight.org](http://www.laharborlight.org)  
[SecondsHungerRelief@hotmail.com](mailto:SecondsHungerRelief@hotmail.com)  
[www.bit.ly/1uHJIs](http://www.bit.ly/1uHJIs)  
[www.tomcheishabbos.org](http://www.tomcheishabbos.org)  
[www.urm.org](http://www.urm.org)  
[www.vbs.org](http://www.vbs.org)  
[www.vic-la.org](http://www.vic-la.org)  
[www.westsidefoodbankca.org](http://www.westsidefoodbankca.org)



# Document Signatories

## *List in Formation*

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The Water Woman Project

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# FED UP WITH HUNGER

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MEANING  
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THE  
JEWISH  
FEDERATION

  
JEWISH  
FAMILY  
SERVICE  
OF LOS ANGELES

{ SOVA  
  
COMMUNITY FOOD AND  
RESOURCE PROGRAM

**MAZON**<sup>®</sup>  
A JEWISH RESPONSE TO HUNGER





# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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Chief Executive Officer

August 3, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
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Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

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## **A BLUEPRINT TO END HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES - A PLAN FOR CHANGE – AN AGENDA FOR ACTION**

On November 24, 2009, on a motion by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, the Board of Supervisors directed this office to encourage all County departments to participate in efforts to coordinate and, where possible, expand the reach of existing anti-hunger programs and initiatives, and begin examining the relevant recommendations in the "Blueprint to End Hunger" (Blueprint) to explore future goals and benchmarks. On December 14, 2009, a copy of the Blueprint was provided to all County departments seeking their input and promoting awareness of the food insecurity issue. On February 8, 2010, we provided your Board with a status report on countywide efforts to feed the hungry, which included information on existing collaboratives and outreach efforts to address the food insecurity problem.

On April 22, 2010, Supervisor Yaroslavsky hosted a meeting with key County departments and community stakeholders to brainstorm on possible strategies that Los Angeles County can implement to address the hunger crisis. The major challenge communicated by those in attendance was to continue to focus on solutions that will break down barriers that prevent eligible populations from applying for federally funded nutrition programs.

As the entire nation continues to struggle with the economic downturn, the growth of unemployment has continued to increase the ranks of those seeking public assistance from the County. The Food Stamp Program (FSP) in Los Angeles County offers

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nutrition benefits to participating families and individuals, supports employment, and provides economic benefits (FSP dollars spent) to local communities. Without FSP assistance, many families would be forced to make the difficult decision between paying rent and buying adequate nutritious food to feed their families. Too many low-income families and individuals who are eligible for the program do not participate, and thus go without nutrition assistance that could stretch their food dollars at the grocery store. Furthermore, communities miss out on the benefits provided by new FSP dollars flowing into the local economy. Recent data has revealed that both California and Los Angeles County have FSP participation rates at 50 percent of the eligible population. Approximately 30.4 percent of the State's entire food stamp (FS) caseload resides in Los Angeles County. As of April 2010, 896,310 individuals were receiving FS benefits in Los Angeles County.

#### Recommended Strategies

This report identifies three areas directly touching the Blueprint action plan. The target areas focus on: 1) Implementation of the Face-to-Face Waiver (FFW); 2) Public Charge Issue (PCI); and 3) Increased Outreach.

We strongly believe that increasing access to the application process by the implementation of the FFW, re-educating the community concerning eligibility requirements associated with the PCI, and focusing on enhanced outreach is critical. Misinformation regarding FSP eligibility requirements, program regulations, and immigration status consequences are still common within communities. Over the last several years, rules have changed which impact FSP benefits. This has caused confusion and is a deterrent for potentially eligible households and individuals to apply for benefits. The County has been working diligently to address and/or eliminate, where possible, unnecessary barriers identified that have kept those most in need from participating in the FSP.

#### Face-to-Face Waiver

The County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) has made the goal of increasing and improving access to FS applications for thousands of eligible Angelenos one of its highest priorities. Limited access to the FS application process and low FS participation means less for all Los Angeles residents, less nutrition assistance for eligible residents, less economic activities, and less sales tax revenue to the State and local government. These losses can be mitigated by eliminating unnecessary barriers to increasing access and participation in the FSP.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is fully aware of California's low FSP participation rate. CDSS sought and received from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), a waiver allowing telephone interviews to be conducted in place of face-to-face interviews. This FS policy change will make applying for FS more accessible and convenient. Individuals and families will no longer have to come to a district office for their interview. They will be able to have their FS interview over the telephone. The implementation of telephone interviews is a critical step to remove barriers to receiving FSP benefits. This new method of enrolling and retaining individuals in the program will help to increase the FSP participation rate among eligible Angelenos. Please note that this USDA Waiver will expire May 31, 2013.

On July 14, 2008, CDSS provided initial instructions on how to implement telephone interviews in place of face-to-face interviews. The FFW initially applied only to certain households. DPSS successfully implemented Phase I of the FFW in September 2009 for the "Non-Assistance" FS household populations at the mandated quarterly recertification process and for the elderly and/or disabled population at both the Initial Application and/or Recertification (IA/R) stage.

On October 23, 2009, CDSS expanded the telephone interviews to all individuals applying for FS benefits - Phase II. This recent FSP policy change will allow the option of telephone interviews to be conducted in place of face-to-face interviews at the IA/R for all FS households. DPSS is in the process of implementing Phase II of the FS FFW interview procedure. DPSS is targeting July 30, 2010, for implementation of the telephone interview option for all new applicants applying for FS benefits. Recertification for all ongoing FS households is targeted for August 31, 2010. This means that by August 2010, all individuals applying for FS benefits or being recertified for FS benefits will have the option of having a FS telephone interview in place of a face-to-face district office interview.

The major benefits of the implementation of the FFW interview option are to increase participation in the FSP and achieve the following:

- Increase and improve access for working families and others who cannot get to the County district office during traditional hours;
- Reduce the complexity and stigma of applying for FS benefits in a County district office setting;
- Provide a new and convenient way for Angelenos to sign up for FS;
- Reduce participation barriers associated in applying for FS benefits;



- Improve applicant/participant flow at the County district office lobbies; and
- Expand and strengthen partnerships with a network of partner organizations.

#### Public Charge Issue

The PCI is a major barrier that keeps eligible families and individuals from applying for FSP. Eligible populations with pending naturalization determinations and citizenship applications continue to shy away from the FSP due to fears that their applications may be negatively impacted. Expanding access to FSP through public education and outreach efforts is critical to dispel misinformation regarding the PCI concern. The word must get out that the FSP is a nutrition assistance program designed to help low-income people buy food.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) District 23 and the County have entered into a partnership to help break down myths surrounding the PCI barrier. USCIS informed states and counties that certain public benefits, including the FSP, are not subject to PCI determinations. USCIS recently released an updated public education notice clarifying the PCI. The notice will be made available through DPSS offices and community and faith-based organizations serving low-income individuals and families.

DPSS has implemented many FSP outreach strategies and partnerships that have had positive results in the FSP participation rate in Los Angeles County. The most recent partnership with USCIS will focus on implementing the following three outreach strategies:

1. Conduct informational PCI forums throughout the County where representatives from DPSS, USCIS, and the USDA FNS will address (educate) media outlets, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, community advocates, immigration attorneys, and specialty law firms on the PCI;
2. Partner with Univision Television to conduct a Spanish media telethon event. The telethon will have subject matter expert representatives from DPSS and USCIS on live telecast demystifying the PCI and answering questions from the Univision host. The telethon event will also have DPSS Eligibility Workers taking calls from the Spanish-speaking public regarding the issue; and

3. Designate a "PCI Awareness" day at all Los Angeles County schools, libraries, parks, health centers, community and senior centers, and all County public contact locations. The event will focus on educating the public regarding "Myths and Facts about Food Stamp Benefits". The event will be promoted through partnerships with the media, community-based, and faith-based organizations.

### Increased Outreach

Education and outreach remain essential to ensure increased participation rates. FSP eligibility information brochures will be made available at all County public contact sites. Every opportunity to enroll eligible households outside of DPSS district offices will be taken. Collaborations are underway to partner with the City of Los Angeles to increase FS participation rates within the city boundaries. DPSS, upon request, will provide training to staff at non-profit and community stakeholder sites on how to screen and/or connect eligible FS clients to FSP Eligibility Workers. The County is currently putting into place a mechanism to train and allow non-profit and community-based partners with the ability to electronically file FSP applications on behalf of their clients.

In addition, DPSS will continue to co-locate Eligibility Workers at non-traditional sites, such as health clinics, hospitals, food pantries, farmer's markets, churches and schools. Partnerships will continue with the Department of Public Health, Department of Children and Family Services, and Department of Health Services to assess their clients and link them to DPSS for eligibility screening.

One of the newest outreach strategies to be rolled out shortly is the DPSS' Mobile Outreach Vehicle (MOV) which will serve as a satellite office. Eligible individuals and families will be able to apply for and/or receive FSP and Medi-Cal benefits through the off-site MOV. The MOV will be equipped with wireless technology to support the use of laptop equipment. There will be two screening areas for applicant interviews. Plans are in the works to partner with non-profit and faith-based organizations to train and utilize their volunteers to pre-screen their client's eligibility for the FSP and/or Medi-Cal benefits. Protocols are being developed to ensure a smooth "kick-off" and maximization of this outreach program. The MOV is expected to be ready for operation this summer.

The MOV will also serve as the County's emergency response unit to provide residents that have immediate needs due to natural disasters with expedited services and benefits. The MOV will also be made available at community-based and faith-based organizations' events (e.g., health fairs and farmers markets).

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The MOV will be instrumental in reducing food insecurity, increasing FSP utilization, and will provide a platform to better serve thousands of low-income residents to obtain FSP and/or Medi-Cal benefits. The County projects an increased participation of 2,001 households in the FSP. Increasing participation in the FSP and Medi-Cal programs will have a positive impact on the income, health and nutrition, and overall well-being of thousands of low-income residents of Los Angeles County.

### Conclusion

While the principal goal of the FSP is to feed hungry people and provide essential nutrition, FSP benefits also encourage healthy eating and are a stimulus to local economies. Most instrumental in the implementation of the three focus areas is collaboration among County, State, and federal agencies and continued efforts with our non-profit and faith-based and community-based organizations. We will continue to work together to fully implement the three focus areas identified in this report. Getting food to those most in need is the ultimate goal.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know, or have your staff contact Kathy House, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer, at (213) 974-4530.

WTF:BC:KH  
DS:RG:cvb

c: All County Departments